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Caught in the Act: Sherri Wilson

By Anya Armes Weber

To catch Division of Policy and Development Internal Policy Analyst Sherri Wilson in the act of exercising, you'd have to be at the gym pretty early – 5 a.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m. on weekends.

"That's the only time I have to work out," she said. "I have to be available in the evenings for my son, to help with homework, and to be a mom and wife. I want to do it all."



Wilson is able to do a lot more now than she could just two years ago. She weighed more than 300 pounds. She was not conscious of her diet, "and exercise was out of the question."

After the deaths of her mother and brother, 10 months apart, she knew she had to make a change.

"They were both overweight and had several weight-related health problems," like diabetes and heart trouble, she said.

Wilson calls the day of her gastric bypass surgery -- Jan. 30, 2004 -- "my new birthday." The procedure contracted Wilson's stomach and allowed food to bypass part of her small intestine, making her feel full more quickly after a meal so she eats less.

The 41-year-old has since lost 142 pounds. She eats healthy meals of mostly vegetables and baked fish, takes daily vitamins and exercises at least five days a week.

The drastic changes haven't been easy, but she gets support from her doctors, work friends and family. A sister who lives in Atlanta had the surgery two years before Wilson. "We are each other's biggest cheerleaders. We talk about what we can wear and how we are feeling. It really helps."

She also carries a picture of her larger self in her purse "to remind me where I came from."

Wilson said some people think gastric surgery is an easy way out, but "it's more difficult than anyone would imagine."

Her 10-year-old son, Israel, and husband, Terry, are Wilson's inspirations. "I want to live healthy for them."

Staff struggling with weight problems should take advantage of America on the Move, Wilson said.

"It feels great to work at a place where wellness is promoted," she said. "I want to encourage others to choose healthy lifestyles as a way to lose weight and keep it off. I would love people to get control before they get in as bad shape as I was," she said.

Wilson said she wants to lose 40 more pounds, and she's dedicated to meet that goal.

"I just remember what got me in trouble to begin with, and I stay focused."

Golf Scramble Benefits SNAP

By Anya Armes Weber

A golf scramble that raised money for the Cabinet's Special Needs Adoption Program last week attracted 127 people.

The Kentucky Mulligan Invitational at the University of Louisville's Cardinal Club was sponsored by the Mulligan Society of Kentucky and

CBMC.

Golfers donated \$180 per two-person team. Proceeds will support three adoption programs, including SNAP.



Protection and Permanency staff gathered at the Kentucky Mulligan Invitational golf scramble. From left, are: Tim Hodge, Stacy Hait, Debbie Green, Karen McKiernan, Mike Grimes and Angie Walz.

Golfers were treated to dinner, a lesson with club instructor Tim Schultz and keynote speakers Jimmy Dan

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Former University of Kentucky basketball star Cameron Mills poses with his younger sister, Melinda, and father, Terry, at the Kentucky Mulligan Invitational golf scramble on April 10, which benefits the Special Needs Adoption Program. Terry and Lorri Mills adopted Melinda through SNAP in 1989.

Conner and Cameron Mills, both former University of Kentucky basketball stars.

Mills' younger sister, Lori, was adopted through SNAP.

Prestonsburg to Host Social Work Conference April 28

By Anya Armes Weber

Morehead State University's Department of Social Work is sponsoring its 3rd annual Social Work Conference at its Prestonsburg campus.

The conference is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, April 28.

Participants can choose their workshops. Substance abuse and stress management are the morning options, and ethical decision making in social work and family violence are offered in the afternoon.

Cost is \$25 for each morning and afternoon session or \$40 for both sessions.

Continuing education units will be offered in social work.

Log on to <http://irapp.morehead-st.edu/forms/swKconferencebrochure2.pdf> to download a registration form.

Call April Miller at (606) 783-2566, or e-mail her at a.miller@moreheadstate.edu for more information.

For driving directions to the MSU at Prestonsburg campus, log onto <http://www.morehead-st.edu/prestonsburg/index.aspx?id=738>.

Kentucky Deferred Compensation Invitation for New Employees

Kentucky Deferred Compensation is an optional state-sponsored benefit available to all state employees. Kentucky Deferred Compensation is the easy, tax-sheltered way to supplement your retirement needs. At Kentucky Deferred Compensation, we want to help new employees like you take full advantage of this important tool for helping you achieve financial independence at retirement. Join us for a brief enrollment presentation on Kentucky Deferred Compensation, and take the actions necessary to:

- Learn about the different risks and rewards associated with investing
- Discover the best way to invest your money to help meet your retirement goals
- Enroll in our 401(k) and /or 457 plan immediately

A New Employee Enrollment Seminar for employees who have been hired in the past 12 months, will be from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m., April 27, at 105 Sea Hero Road, Suite 1, in Frankfort. Lunch will be provided.

Because of limited seating, pre-registration is required. To register, Call Carol Cummins or Larincia Bowers at (502) 573-7925 or (800) 542-2667. Please call for an enrollment kit if you are unable to attend.

Laboratory Services Sponsors Auction

The Division of Laboratory Services is having a silent auction from 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Wednesday, April 19, in the 2nd floor conference room of the Centralized Lab Facility at 100 Sower Boulevard. Various items will be up for auction and all proceeds will go towards the Medical Laboratory Professionals Week celebration, planned for April 24-28. Continue to watch the Focus for the week's events.

If you have questions or would like to donate an item, contact Medina at medina.tipton@ky.gov. The last day to donate items is Tuesday, April 18.

Loading Dock Work Continues

The concrete project at the CHR and HSB breezeway/loading dock area started Friday, April 14, and continues this week. Forming for concrete placement

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should take place today with concrete placement on Tuesday. Wednesday, the contractor will remove the forms, seal concrete and clean up the project site. This is the project schedule if there are no accruing problems or bad weather during this time frame.

CHFS Health Tip: April is Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month

Many people suffer from digestive problems that don't go away. It is estimated more than 20 million people have Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Two-thirds of the patients are female. If you suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), you know how discomforting it can be.

The disorder, which interferes with the normal functions of the large intestine, is characterized by a group of symptoms: cramping abdominal pain and discomfort; bloating; diarrhea; constipation; or alternating diarrhea and constipation. These symptoms can be aggravated by large meals, bloating from gas in the colon, medications or eating/drinking certain products such as wheat, rye, barley, chocolate, milk, caffeinated drinks or alcohol and stress.

IBS is believed to be caused by increased sensitivity of the bowel. Psychological stress and eating may bring on the symptoms. Managing stress and changing your diet are the main treatments for the condition. Medications may be used to treat severe symptoms.

Never attempt to treat yourself for IBS without consulting with your doctor. It is important to speak with your health care providers about safety and what's right for you. Find a doctor who understands IBS, and work together on your treatment plan.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.



Being assertive is more than just standing up for yourself. It means making your opinions clear, respecting yourself and showing consideration for the feelings of others.

The University of Texas' Counseling and Mental Health Center offers the "I-Language Assertion" model for expressing negative feelings involving a three-part statement:.

1. "When you do ..." Describe the behavior.
2. "The effects are ..." Describe how the behavior affects you.
3. "I'd prefer ..." Describe what you want.

Here's an example. "When you gave the report to me two days late, I couldn't get my evaluation done on time. I'd prefer you give me paperwork on time."

When we are angry, we tend to blame others or show our emotions. This speaker doesn't blame and focuses on their feelings.

Mastering assertive communication takes time, but it can preserve workplace relationships and your professional reputation.